DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 335 565 CG 023 558

AUTHOR Eichenfield, Gregg A.; Audas, Millie
TITLE Crisis Management/Death and Dying: Coping with Terminal Illness in the International Student Community.
PUB DATE Mar 91
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American College Personnel Association (Atlanta, GA, March 15-20, 1991).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Counselor Role; Crisis Intervention; *Death; *Foreign Students; Grief; Higher Education; Mental Health Programs; Psychiatric Services; Student Personnel Services; *Terminal Illness
IDENTIFIERS *Dying

ABSTRACT

The success of crisis intervention work with international students is highly dependent not only on the skill of the professional staff involved, but also the availability and use of other student services that may be provided to the International Student Services (ISS) Office. There are many cultural issues that must be considered when counseling international students beyond the basic trust, empathy, active listening skills and sensitivity that should be present in all cross-cultural, interpersonal interactions. Ongoing, supportive relationships must be established between ISS and mental health services (MHS). A positive, helpful relationship can be abused by ISS if every or too many students are referred to MHS. Instead, it is best to evaluate the problem to determine whether a referral is appropriate, find those staff who are most supportive and use them as primary interveners. Concerns of the terminally ill international students include personal and emotional preparation for death, adequacy of medical care, and providing physical and emotional comfort. Many cultural issues may arise when counseling the terminally ill student or the friends and family after death. These include religion and religious beliefs, concepts and assumptions about death and terminal illness, financial issues and insurance, and reluctance to seek psychological assistance. (Guidelines for responding to the death of an international student, or the death of an international student's loved one are provided.) (LLL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

GREGG A. EICHENFIELD

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED335565

CG023558

[Millie Audas]

ACPA 1991

Gregg A. Eichenfield, Ph.D. University of Oklahoma

Crisis Management/Death and Dying: Coping with Terminal Illness in the International Student Community.

The success of crisis intervention work with international students is highly dependent not only on the skill of the professional staff involved, but also the availability and use of other student services that may be provided to the International Student Services Office. It is important for international student advisors not only to feel comfortable with other professionals they may choose to invlove in the crisis, but also to trust their clinical judgement, to view interventions with students or communities as collaborative efforts, and to believe that crises can ben resolved in the best interest of the student without compromising the integrity of the institution. In summary: **Crisis intervention/management should be viewed as collaboration, not interference.**

There are many cultural issues that must be considered when counseling international students beyond the basic trust, empathy, active listening skills and sensitivity that should be present in all cross-cultural, interpersonal interactions. It is vital that the international student advisor and the mental health professsional establish the needed congruence in their approach to intervention if one is to hope for successful resolution of critical situations; this collaborative effort is especially true in situations of terminal illness and the death of an international student.

In the intense, often stressful and fatiguing process of intervention, both parties--the international student advisor and the mental health worker--need understanding, mutual respect, assistance, and validation of each other. Building and maintaining these relationships, as well as effective intervention in death-related crises are the goals of this program.

<u>Establishing and Maintaining Relationships Between Mental Health Services and International Student Services.</u>

If you are going to effectively intervene with international students, ongoing, supportive relationships must be established between International Student Services (ISS) an mental health services (MHS). These relationships can be facilitated by:

Inviting staffs to meet together and establish relations
ISS provide in-service training to MHS staff about differences with international students--in general and specific to particular groups of students
ISS request training (or offered by MHS) in counseling

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

skills or assertion, or other topics deemed helpful
Maintain contacts through consultation and participation in other activities (e.g., MHS staff invited to ISS events--dinners, awards banquets, etc.)

THESE RELATIONSHIPS TAKE TIME, EFFORT, AND HARD WORK. BUT THEY DO PAY OFF IN TIMES OF CRISES.

"Crying Wolf"

A postive, helpful relationship can be abused by ISS if every or too many students are referred to MHS. Instead, evaluate the problem to determine whether a referral is appropriate:

Can the problem be resolved in the ISS office?
Does the student (or you) need time out to think?
Is the problem psychological in nature or cultural adjustment?
Not every situation is a crisis that needs to be handled now by MHS. Can I make an appointment with/for the student?
Because a student is demanding, must I respond now?

DO refer crises and those problems with acutely disturbed students
DO let MHS assist you in determining the nature of the problem and what assistance might be provided

Support vs Involvement

Don't expect MHS staff to be involved in all that ISS does. Some MHS staff may themselves feel uncomfortable around people of other cultures. Find those staff who are most supportive (in both offices) and use them as Primary Interveners. Support their knowledge and willingness to help, their work with you, and their efforts to increase knowledge and awareness of cultural differences with their respective staffs. Understand that your efforts will be supported, even without involvment from all staff in both offices.

THE CONCERNS OF THE TERMINALLY ILL INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

Individual/Personal Concerns
Personal/Emotional preparations for death
Adequacy of Medical Care (Student Health & other care)
Providing physical/emotional comfort
Possibility of hospice care
Personal counseling for student, family, support system

Intervention with these concerns
Trust your intuition/be open/show genuine concern
Feel positive, assertive about your position

You are "the family" away from the student's own family; demonstrate that care/warmth
Listen to the student
Be sensitive to different personality traits: shyness, overtness, driven, compulsive
Involve others--don't work with the student alone--share the responsibilities
Encourage the student (in private) to seek help
Encourage assistance from friends/nationality grp
Expect the unexpected, prepare for the ambiguous; and the student will appreciate these efforts

Cultural Concerns and Implications

Many cultural issues may arise when counseling the terminally ill student or the friends/family after death, beyond basic trust, empathy, listening skills, sensitivity:

Religion and religious beliefs
Concepts and assumptions about death and terminal illness
Losing face
Failure
Financial issues, insurance
Reluctance to seek psychological assistance

Involving Others

Choose MHS staff who will be helpful and supportive: of the student, the situation and ISS staff
Communicate (with student's permission) with others besides family/friends, who might be of help (e.g., academic advisors, faculty, RAs, Apt. Mgr, etc.)

Preparations for Death

Go over all issues with necessary people mentioned above
Begin checklist of people to inform
Prepare yourself, as well as others on your staff(s), for emotional response
Seek help for yourself, as needed (talk to someone, exercise to relieve tension, take time off)

Other Concerns

Death certificates/medical records
Insurance companies
Informing students, staff, faculty of actual death
Informing student's family, friends, embassy/consulate
Disposition of the body

<u>THE DEATH OF AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT</u>

Contacting Significant Others

Phone calls/telex/letter/fax to family, relatives, etc
Contacting students, faculty, staff, administration

Legal Issues
Information released to media
Liability issues
Public statements
Differences between victims of accident/crime

Institutional Policies

Student Response to notification of the death
Friends/roommates/students from nationality group
Expect a variety of reactions (anger, sadness, depression, hyperactivity)
Backlash against System, Institution, You (as representative of the U.S.)
Share your own grief and allow students more time (e.g. let them linger in the office)

Staff Response
Your own response
Handling your own response--TALK!

ISS office staff
Be open
"Business as Usual", and yet time away from area, as necessary
Phone Calls to be routed for "official response"
Arranging for coverage during memorial service, and other related logistical concerns

MHS staff (if involved, and student known)
Student Services staff
Faculty/Staff from student's home department

Other Concerns (see above section)

<u>THE DEATH OF AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT'S LOVED ONE</u>

Contacting the student (if you receive the information first)
In person or by telephone

Legal Issues
Decisions about travel
Travel Arrangements
Visas/documents

Impact on other students
Academic/Institutional policies re: absence from campus, incompletes in courses, etc.

<u>RELATED MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES FOR BOTH AREAS OF CONCERN</u>

Collaborative Efforts--Joint work from beginning to end of crisis
Be sure and plan for follow-up with affected individuals,

groups, organizations

Grief Work
- Resolution for self
- Expect a variety of reactions

Provide intervention for affected staff, faculty, and students, beyond those who are directly involved, since grief reactions are varied, in kind, severity, and time period.

TITLE: Crisis Management / Death and Dying: Coping with terminal illness and the death of a student in the International Community.

Suggested Readings

Althen, Gary (Ed.) (1981). Learning Across Cultures. Washington, D.C.: National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA).

Audas, M. & Eichenfield, G. (1989). Sending them home: Problem Students and/or Mental Illness Abroad. In Hill, D.J. (Ed.) Crisis, Emergencies and the Study Abroad Program. Worthington, OH: Renaissance Publications

Bochner, Stephen. (1982). Cultures in Contact. New York: Pergamon Press.

Burak, Patricia A. (1987). Crisis Management in a Cross-Cultural Setting. National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA).

Dadfar, S., & Friedlander, M.L. (1982). Differential attitudes of international students toward seeking professional psychological help. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 29(3), 355-338.

D'Augelli, A., D'Augelli, S., & Danish, S. (1981). Helping Others. San Francisco, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Hall, E.T. (1959). The Silent Language. Garden City: Doubleday.

Kohls, Robert L. (1981). Developing Intercultural Awareness. Washington, D.C.: The Society for Intercultural Education, Training, and Research.

Koslow, D.R. & Salett, E.P. (Eds.) (1989). Crossing Cultures in Mental Health. Washington, D.C.: Sietar International.

Perkins, C.S., Perkins, M.L., Guglielmino, L.M., & Reiff, R. F. (1977). A comparison of the adjustment problems of three international student groups. Journal of College Student Personnel, 18, 382-388.

Audas/Eichenfield
The University of Oklahoma
10/88

Guidelines in the event of the death of an international student:

The understanding of and respect for the differences in each culture are vital for the effective resolution of crisis concerning terminal illness and/or the death of an international student.

- Look in student's file: Personal Data Sheet (completed upon arrival to school or at mandatory Orientation). Check country of origin, person(s) listed as close friend or relative in the U.S. Inform that person immediately.

- Inform the Chief Student Personnel Officer and mental health professional in counseling services

- Inform the representative/agent of Student Insurance company.

- Take file to place of death, i.e., hospital, emergency ward. Will need information for various death certificate forms and to cross check information that hospital may have.

- Meet with spouse, close friends, club president and decide manner in which parents will be informed. Sometimes one needs to use a cable, night-letter (through Western Union), most frequently through overseas call. Both cable and phone call should be made first to close relative/friend in the student's country if at all possible. It is important that someone close to the family be physically present to give news of death.

- Advise--in phone call or cable-- that another call will follow a bit later to find out what would the family wish regarding body flown back to home nation, burial or funeral services locally, etc. Also they will be asked to inform us regarding what to do with belongings, checking/savings accounts, etc., left by student.

- Advise all related student services of student's death: Housing, Food Services, Records, etc.

- Advise Immigration and Naturalization Service office of student's death. Give full information on Personal Data Sheet.

- Notice in student newspaper and town paper will announce death of student to faculty and community. If student has a host family in town, they should be advised through personal call or visit.

- Call the nearest Consulate or Embassy and report the of student's death giving main statistics, re., major, town/city of origin, home address, etc. If possible request that a representative of the Consulate come to campus to attend the services and to meet with spouse or intimate friends.

- Request that the university make full tuition/fees reimbursement for the semester during which student died. This should be communicated in writing to the Bursar's Office and the to student's family.

- Send cable of condolence from International Office, request that Chief Stedent Personnel Officer President of the institution also send messages of condolence.

- Meet with Funeral Director, spouse and/or close friends to decide details (type of service, casket, clothes for burial or shipment home, etc.) at earliest possible time.

- Advise all concerned to seek counseling and establish on-going rapport with mental health professional until situation is accepted, until return to 'normalcy'. Person handling the situation (YOU) is encouraged to also seek assistance/support/encouragment of mental health professional. May wish to have mental health worker meet with student organization and/or close friends to begin or facillitate grief process (cultural considerations determine interventions.

In all of the above steps one can find the reassurance of doing the "right" thing by consulting psychologist and just as importantly by discussing all steps with president and members/friends of student's nationality club.

References

Anderson, T.R. & Myer, T.E. (1985). Presenting problems, counselor contacts, and "no shows": International and American college students. Journal of College Student Personnel, 26, 500-503.

Dadfar, S. & Friedlander, M.L. (1982). Differential attitudes of international students toward seeking professional help. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 29, 335-338.

Eichenfield, G.A. (1988). Needs of special populations of men. In May, R. & Scher, M. (Eds.), Changing Roles for Men on campus: New Directions for Student Services, 42 (Summer). San Francisco: Josey/Bass.

Leong, F. U Sedlacek, W.E. (1985). Comparison of international and U.S. students preference for helping sources (Research Report No. 1-85). College Park, MD: Counseling Center, University of Maryland.

Perkins, C.S., Perkins, M.L., Guglielmino, L.M., & Reiff, R.F. (1977). A comparison of the adjustment problems of three international student groups. Journal of College Student Personnel, 18, 382-388.

AREAS OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY TO WHICH STUDENT DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS SHOULD BE SENSISTIVE CONCERNING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Family structure
Important events in the life cycle
Roles of individual members
Rules of interpersonal interactions
Communication and linguistic rules
Rules of decorum and discipline
Religious beliefs
Standards for health and hygiene
Food preferences
Dress and personal appearance
History and traditions
Holidays and celebrations
Education and teaching methods
Perceptions of work and play
Perceptions of time and space
Explanations of natural phenomena
Attitudes towards pets and animals
Artistic and musical values and tastes
Life expectations and aspirations

SOME QUESTIONS TO HELP IDENTIFY CULTURAL ASSUMPTIONS

Family Structure

Who is considered a member of the family?
What are the rights, roles, responsibilities of each person?

Interpersonal Relationships

How do people greet each other?
Who may disagree with whom?
How are insults expressed?

Decorum and Discipline

How do people behave at home, in public?
What means of discipline are used?
Who has authority over whom?

Food

What is eaten, in what order, how often?
What foods are favorites, taboo, typical?
What are the rules for table manners, offering foods, handling foods, discarding foods?

Holidays and Celebrations

What holidays are observed, and what are their purposes?
Which holidays are important for children?
What cultural values are instilled in children during the holidays?

Values

What personal attributes are considered desirable?
What things (attributes) in the world are considered desirable? Undesirable?

Adapted from: Koslow, D.R. & Salett, E.P. (1989). Crossing Cultures in Mental Health. SIETAR International, pp 18-20.